Research Proposal Elements

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**Research Proposal Elements**

Research proposals are an integral part of academic as well as professional research. In an academic setting, a student has to present a proposal before starting actual research on the topic. The primary purpose of the research paper is to convince the readers that there is a need to study the research problem. It also provides with the possible ways in which the researcher will perform the study. Depending on the importance of the document, each research paper follows a definite pattern having multiple elements. Most common elements of a research proposal are described as under.

**Abstract:**

The abstract is an optional element of a research proposal. Most of the time an abstract is added at the beginning of the research proposal if a third party or institution fund the research project. Abstract provides the reader with the basic idea that what the research is actually about. It serves as the first impression on the reader. Abstracts must be written in layman style because the person reading the abstract may not be aware of the technical jargon used in the actual research.

**Introduction and Background of the Study:**

The introduction is an essential element of any research proposal. The introduction provides an overview of the research project, the researcher, and what the proposal is going to consist of. The introduction must include a capsule statement capable of capturing the reader's attention that why the research is interesting and worth the effort. Broad foundation for the problem that leads to the study is presented in the background section of the proposal. The background of the research study enables the reader to understand the general reasons behind the project.

**Statement of the Problem;**

Whenever a research project is started, there is always a research problem that the researcher is interested in exploring. The research question that leads to a problem that needs to be solved by the research is presented in the statement of the problem element of the research proposal. The statement of problem narrows down the broad understanding of the problem developed in the background element of the proposal (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It is also known as the thesis statement in academic research projects. Most of the time in technical projects or fields of study such as in engineering projects the statement of the problem is the same as the title of the project itself. In technical projects, the title of the project explains the problem as well.

**Objectives:**

After laying out the problem and narrowing it down to the specific point in the statement of the problem the researcher needs to develop the objectives section of the research proposal. The objectives element of the proposal reveals information about what the research hopes to accomplish. A clear objective helps the reader of the proposal to develop a clear vision towards the research.

**The significance of the Study:**

Given the fact that the problem statement and objectives of the research are explained, the researcher has to convince that why the research is worth doing in this particular element. The researcher will provide information that what the research will contribute to the field of study. The purpose of this element in the research paper is to state how the findings of the study can make a difference.

**Limitations of the Study:**

Research is always about narrowing down to a specific problem. It is not possible for any researcher to explore a whole domain of study in a research project. Therefore, the limitation element of the proposal explicitly explains all of the aspects of the problem not included in the particular study (Attard, 2018). Limitation of the study defines the boundaries for the research project because a too wide area of investigation is impractical.

**Definition of Terms:**

In this element of the research proposal, all of the technical and field-specific terminologies are defined with appropriate references. The purpose of the element is to make the readers familiar with the technical terms used in the proposal as well as in the final project reports. The section is crucial because the reader may not be aware of the technical terminologies of the specific research field.

**Literature Review:**

The literature review is an integral element of any research proposal. No research is possible without carrying out an extensive literature review. In the literature review section of the research proposal, the writer has to explain that s/he is aware of the previous research in the same field. The integrity of the literature review element shows that the researcher has the required theoretical knowledge in the chosen research area (Dresch, Lacerda, & Antunes, 2015). The literature review will let the researcher know about the previous methodologies used for similar work. It allows the exploration of available information resources that can be reused with proper referencing.

**Methodology:**

In this section, the methodology of collecting data is explained, and the choice is justified with the help of references from the literature review. The section informs the reader about the kind of data used to deduce the results. If an adapted methodology is to be used, then the reasons for not using the existing methodologies are explained in this section of the proposal.

**References and Bibliography:**

The final element of the research proposal is the references and bibliography. References include the list of previous work consulted by the writer and appropriately cited in the text as well. While the bibliography contains all the sources consulted by the researcher even if they are not directly cited in the text. The style of bibliography and referencing varies with the requirements of the study.

References

Attard, N. (2018). WASP (Write a Scientific Paper): Writing an academic research proposal. *Early Human Development*.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

Dresch, A., Lacerda, D. P., & Antunes, J. A. V. (2015). Proposal for the conduct of design science research. In *Design Science Research* (pp. 117–127). Springer.